

# The Abundant Life Garden Project®

WELCOME TO THE

# GREENHOUSE



**Stories from the Field for**

# **The Abundant Life Garden Project®**

offered by Episcopal Relief & Development

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Episcopal Relief & Development would like to thank the following for their contribution to

**The Abundant Life Garden Project®**

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Week 1:

# WATER

## Notes for Leaders:

You may want to consider bringing in show-and-tell items to go with each of the videos and the themes for each day.

**Leader:** Welcome to the Story Hut! Here we will be learning about what it means to have and share Abundant Life in other parts of the world through the gifts of nature. Today we are learning about the gifts of water.

Let's watch our first video about why Water is so important:

## Clean Water Programs



<https://youtu.be/cmSsvR18JhM>

*What do you have to do to get water?* (Listen to the kids answers).  
*Do you have to dig wells or haul your water?*

Let's watch some other stories about the importance of water

## Wells in Nicaragua

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0NjSvtKQhY&lr=1&uid=9H4DbjpmVd3I-1e-txDg>

## Wells and Sanitation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9riTPKTfT4>

## Questions for Reflection

- What would your family have to do differently if you had to walk 10 minutes to a stream to get water?
- How would you feel about walking to get water?
- What could you, your family, your church, or your community do to help people who do not have easy access to clean drinking water?

## Dismissal

Challenge the kids to notice how many times they use water during a day and how easy it is for them. Ask them to say a Thank You prayer each time they use or see water.



Week 2:

# SOIL

**Leader:** Welcome to the Story Hut for Week 2 of VBS! Today we are learning about the gift of soil.

*Who thinks soil is important?*

*What do you think soil might have to do with having abundant life?*

Let's listen and watch some stories about how important soil is for our friends around the world.

## **Effective Microorganism (EM) farming in Myanmar/Burma**

(you will need to read the text below over this video)

*In this video Power of Partnerships celebrates the success of an innovative program in Myanmar/Burma to boost crop production and improve soil quality through the use of Effective Microorganism (EM) technology. "Starter" bacteria strengthen the helpful microbes in the local soil and make a nutrient-rich, low-cost fertilizer that can double harvests within three years. Episcopal Relief & Development is working with the Church of the Province of Myanmar to support a demonstration farm that offers on-site training and mobile workshops to help farmers implement the new methodology and adopt other practices that reduce the impact of drought.*

## Building Bricks

Using soil to create income and community



<https://youtu.be/SZ4Hc4qaXD8>

## Effective Organism

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOyechFu14)



[v=JqOyechFu14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOyechFu14)

## Questions for Reflection

- In these videos we say dirt and soil being used for different purposes: How many ways did the communities in the videos benefit from good soil? Let's try and name them together.
- How do you benefit from good soil? How does your community, town, or state benefit?
- What could you, your family, your church, or your community do to help people who need to improve their soil?

## Dismissal

Challenge the kids to notice how many times they use water during a day and how easy it is for them. Ask them to say a Thank You prayer each time they use or see water.



Week 3:

# SEEDS

**Leader:** Hello everyone! Welcome back to the Story Hut! Today we are going to talk about the gift of seeds.

*What is your favorite kind of seed?*

*What about your favorite kind of fresh fruit or vegetable?*

Do you ever think about how those fruits and vegetables start from seeds, and what it takes for them to be able to grow into food?

## STORY

### *Homegrown – Returning Refugees Build Communities in South Sudan*

If you have time, have older children or youth volunteers, read this brief true story.

How do you return home to a place you don't remember? How do you feed your family, when the only agricultural "know-how" exists in the memories of a few elders? How do you rebuild a life when the future seems so uncertain?

These questions are some of the challenges facing the South Sudanese refugees returning from camps in Uganda, Kenya and Khartoum.

For many of these people, though, "returning" may feel more like being in a strange place again. Bused in from camps – where they at least had some small food rations, a steady supply of water and limited access to health care and education – returning families were transported back to South Sudan with only three months of food rations and a few tools and kitchen utensils. People were forced to build entire communities from scratch, with little except their own energy and labor, and whatever possessions they had managed to acquire in their lives as refugees. One such community is Panyakwor.

## A New Nation: South Sudan



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cki7Vb8QVtl&feature=plcp>

**WATCH THE VIDEO** featuring the new nation of South Sudan, courtesy of Episcopal News Service, may supplement this Story from the Field.

### Questions for Reflection

- How is farming in the film similar to agriculture in your community?
- How is farming in the film different from that in your community?
- How would you know what to grow and how best to grow a variety of foods, if you were given the gift of farmland? What else would you need?

Week 3:

# SEEDS

In under a year, with the return of refugees and displaced people, the population of Panyakwor grew from a few hundred to 20,000. People started building wherever the buses set them down, organizing neighborhoods of simple shelters and setting up schools in the shade of trees. Now there is a building for the school, and the government has opened up a small health post, but significant challenges still remain. Among these is the food supply.

In refugee camps, rations (small amounts of food) were provided by camp authorities or organizations operating in the area. Crowded conditions made farming, gardening and livestock-rearing impractical. As a result, after years or even decades of living in the camps, the only working knowledge of farming existed in the memories of the older people, the grandparents.



New to agriculture, the people in Panyakwor needed training to make farming a sustainable source of food. In support of these efforts, Episcopal Relief & Development has been partnering with the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) and its relief and development arm, SUDRA (the Sudanese Development and Relief Agency), in operating a model farm. There, local farmers are receiving basic training in planting, weeding and mulching. Two side-by-side plots demonstrate how crops grow when the seeds are planted in rows, ensuring optimal water and light for each plant, compared to the traditional practice of just scattering seed. The farm hired 30 people to prepare the land and receive training, but then the 30 laborers in turn hired family members and neighbors to help with the task. In the end, the original 30 shared their wages with those who had helped, and everyone received training that would help them in their own family gardens.

## Questions for Reflection

- What do people in South Sudan and other countries need to feed themselves? What tools might they need?
- What information might they need?
- How could you or your community help those who are learning about farming for the first time?

## Dismissal

Challenge the kids to notice how many things they eat or see that come from seeds the next day. Ask them to keep a count that they can share with the whole class. Remind them to give thanks each time they enjoy something that comes from seeds.



Week 4:

# ANIMALS

**Leader:** Hello everyone! Welcome back to the Story Hut! Tonight we are going to talk about the gift animals.

*What is your favorite animal?*

*How does that animal provide happiness for you?*

Let's watch some videos about a variety of ways that animals can help bring gifts of abundant life around the world.



## Raising Goats in the Philippines

<https://youtu.be/EEz8iro10-A>

### Questions for Reflection

- What would people need to know before they cared for the animals shown in the film?
- What other materials or equipment would they need to effectively care for the animals?
- How did the gift of these animals benefit the whole community?



## Beekeeping in Kenya

<https://youtu.be/jBIWT7tok7M>

### Questions for Reflection

- In what ways did the bees in the video help bring gifts of abundant life?
- What kind of help did the community need to start keeping bees?
- When you think of your town, community or state, what are some ways that animals help provide income for families?



## Donkey, Plow, Cart

<https://youtu.be/01WCy6oNseM>

### Questions for Reflection

- How did the donkeys in this video help provide gifts for abundant life?
- How did Episcopal Relief & Development contribute to the women's lives?
- There are 27 bible verses that instruct us to care for widows. What are some ways that you, your family, or your church could help women like the widows in the video?



Week 4:

# ANIMALS

## Story from Kishorinagar

If you have time, have older children or youth volunteers, read this brief true story.

In the tiny village of Kishorinagar in northern India, Rupchard and Rhada, a husband and wife, struggled for years to make an income from the land.

They managed to piece together an existence from fishing, raising pigs and growing vegetables.

Through a joint small money initiative between Episcopal Relief & Development and the Church of North India, the couple received chicks and chickens, allowing them to begin a small poultry business. They determined just how many chickens they would need to make a profit, and even built a special shed to protect the chickens.

“With 30 eggs in a day, it’s possible to recover the cost of the feed, multiply our stock and sell older chickens for profit,” Rhada says. Now, Rupchard and Rhada are on the road to self-reliance, thanks to a small investment from Episcopal Relief & Development.

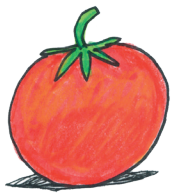
### Questions for Reflection

- What gifts were Rhada and Rupchard given?
- How did this gift provide a gift to others, too?
- What could you do to help others through the gift of animals?

### Dismissal

Remind children to notice how many animals they see the next day. Ask them to think on how the animals are making life better for someone. Encourage them to say a prayer giving thanks for the gift of animals.





Week 5:

# HARVEST

**Leader:** Hello everyone! Welcome back to the Story Hut! Can you believe it is our last time in the Story Hut? Me either!

Tell me what you know about harvesting.

*Have you ever harvested anything?*

*Have you ever eaten anything that was harvested?*

## Agriculture Programs

You may need to read some of the slides



<https://youtu.be/5496gArNuCw>

### Questions for Reflection

- How is Episcopal Relief & Development helping to ensure healthy harvest?
- How have lives been changed because of healthy harvest?

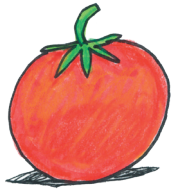
## Passion Fruit Farming



<https://youtu.be/Z330IMo21nQ>

### Questions for Reflection

- What is the crop that farmers in Kenya are able to grow that is popular?
- How are the women helping with the farming program?
- How did this program start? (The man who worked for the government decided to go back to his hometown to teach people how to farm better.)
- What lengths would you go to to make sure that you could grow and sell food in order to provide for your family?
- What can you do to help those in your community gain access to healthy food?



Week 5:

# HARVEST

## Story from Solomon

If you have time, have older children or youth volunteers, read this brief true story.

Twenty-one years ago, Solomon, a father of six from the Upper East Region of Ghana, lost his sight to river blindness, a preventable and treatable disease. Unable to work, he was reduced to begging on the streets of Bolgatanga while his wife, Adiza, sold charcoal. Still, their combined income didn't cover their expenses – and there was no money to pay their children's school fees. Solomon learned about the Disability Rehabilitation Program (DRP), supported by Episcopal Relief & Development and its local partners. At the DRP, Solomon learned basket-weaving and wreath-making skills, and with just \$60 in start-up capital, he began a basket-making business and doubled his initial investment in three short months.

"A physical disability is not an inability," Solomon explains. "With very little support, people like me can do a lot to improve their lives." Solomon's business is now a family affair. Adiza and the children harvest straw from nearby fields. She helps her husband weave and transports the fine baskets to a nearby market for sale. For the first time, the family eats well and attends to their basic health needs, with enough money to enroll the children in schools and vocational skill training centers.

### Dismissal

As we learned today, there are harvest all around us, and we can help. We can harvest help for volunteers. We can help people harvest support for their needs. And we can help harvest food for those who need and for our families! What kind of harvest are you going to look for this week?